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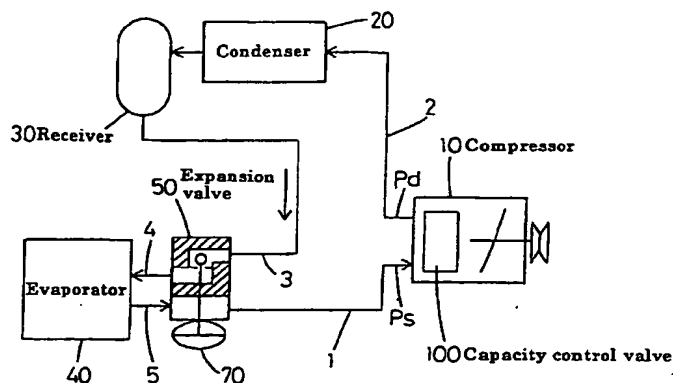
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(54) An expansion valve in a refrigerating cycle.

(57) An expansion valve (50) of a refrigerating cycle containing a compressor (10) with variable capacity, hunting of the flow of the refrigerant as soon as the expansion valve (50) starts to open in a condition where the capacity of the compressor (10) is varied, the variation of the cross-section of the passage of the refrigerant in the expansion over a selected amount of the moving stroke of a valve body (53) of the expansion

valve (50) is less than the variation of the cross-section with another moving stroke amount of the valve body (53). The stroke section or stroke range with the reduced gradient of the variation of the cross-section extends between a position (E) in the neighbourhood of the fully closed state position and a position (F) in a middle part of the opening stroke of the expansion.

Fig.1



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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to an expansion valve of a refrigerating cycle including a compressor with variable capacity, according to the preamble part of claim 1 and, further according to the preamble part of claim 9.

[0002] As the compressor in a refrigerating cycle of an air-conditioning system of an automobile directly is driven by the engine, the speed of compressor cannot be controlled individually. In order to obtain proper refrigerating ability without limitation by the engine speed compressors with variable capacity are used, like compressors of the inclined plate type, the rotary type or the scroll type or the like. The capacity of the compressor is changed in correspondence to the pressure of the inhaled refrigerant or the inhalation pressure.

[0003] The expansion valve in said refrigerating cycle is controlled corresponding to variation of the temperature and the pressure of the low-pressure refrigerant supplied from the evaporator. Since the outlet of the evaporator directly communicates with the inlet of the compressor, the pressure of the refrigerant exiting the evaporator is equal to the inhalation pressure of the compressor. Any variations of the pressure at the outlet of the evaporator directly affect the inhalation pressure of the compressor. If the capacity of compressor is changed due to a variation of the inhalation pressure and if then the expansion valve opens and closes suddenly corresponding to the variation of the capacity of the compressor, even the outlet pressure of the evaporator rapidly and largely may vary. The degree of the variation of the capacity of the compressor thus is amplified by variations of the inhalation pressure, since the compressor has to follow the inhalation pressure variations. Said amplification leads to an undesirable hunting effect over a certain period of time, e.g. several dozens of seconds up to several minutes in the flow of the refrigerant.

[0004] It is an object of the present invention to provide an expansion valve in a refrigerating cycle allowing to essentially suppress hunting of the flow of refrigerant as soon as the expansion valve opens corresponding with a condition according to which the capacity of the compressor is changed. Suppressing hunting means that the hunting either should be totally suppressed or at least significantly attenuated.

[0005] Said task can be achieved with the features contained in claim 1 and also by the feature combination of claim 9.

[0006] Within the expansion valve the cross-section for the refrigerant passing to the evaporator is controlled differently within a first stroke section adjacent to the fully closed state position and within further stroke sections where the valve body already has been lifted farther from the valve seat bore. In particular, the variation of the cross-section within the first stroke section is smaller at any stroke increment of the valve body than

at stroke increments of the same magnitude but in the further stroke section. In other words, during an opening stroke of the expansion valve the gradient of the curve representing the increase of the cross-section through the valve, i.e. a specific variation per stroke increment, is flatter within said first stroke section and is steeper within any further stroke section. The same is true for the movement of the valve body in closing direction. This operational behaviour of the expansion valve allows to effectively control hunting of the flow of the refrigerant when the capacity of the compressor is changed. A further, assisting measure for the effective control of the hunting effect, is to set the value of the pressure at the outlet of the evaporator for the moment where the expansion valve starts to open into a certain relation to the maximum inhalation pressure within the range where the capacity of the compressor is changed, particularly so that the pressure at the outlet of the evaporator then is equal or lower than said maximum inhalation pressure. This measure, additionally, allows to effectively suppress the hunting effect and to guarantee a sufficient cooling effect within the refrigerating cycle.

[0007] According to the invention this mainly is the result of the design of the expansion valve body with a prolongation diving into the valve seat bore within a first opening stroke section close to the fully closed state position and such that a progressively increasing variation of the cross-section for the refrigerant only takes place in the second part of the stroke where the expansion valve opens more progressively. In other words, during the first opening stroke section the valve body is co-acting with the valve seat bore like a flow regulator with a controlled throttling effect allowing to control the amount of refrigerant corresponding to a predetermined ramp function. Said regulating measure is applied exclusively within the first stroke section and where the influence of the expansion valve for hunting is the strongest.

[0008] Preferred embodiments of the invention are contained in the depending claims.

[0009] Embodiments of the invention will be explained with the help of the drawings. In the drawings is:

Fig. 1 a block diagram of a refrigerating cycle,

Fig. 2 a schematic cross-section of a compressor and a capacity control valve defining an actuation pressure shift means in a first embodiment,

Fig. 3 a diagram representing the capacity of the compressor in relation to inhalation pressure as an illustration of capacity control characteristics of the compressor in the first embodiment,

- Fig. 4 a longitudinal sectional view of an expansion valve according to the first embodiment,
- Fig. 5 a part of an enlarged longitudinal section of the expansion valve of Fig. 4,
- Fig. 6 a diagram of the cross-section of the flow passage in said expansion valve in relation to the stroke of the valve body in relation to a valve seat bore,
- Fig. 7 a part of an enlarged longitudinal section of another embodiment of the expansion valve,
- Fig. 8 a diagram of the relation between pressure and temperature illustrating a saturating curve of the refrigerant and the temperature/ pressure characteristic curve of the refrigerant at the outlet of an evaporator and when the expansion valve begins to open,
- Fig. 9 a diagram of the relation between pressure and temperature illustrating a saturating curve of the refrigerant and another example of a temperature pressure characteristic curve of the refrigerant at the outlet of the evaporator and as soon as the expansion valve begins to open,
- Fig. 10 a longitudinal section of a capacity control valve of the compressor as a second embodiment, and
- Fig. 11 a diagram of the relation between the capacity of the compressor and the inhalation pressure representing a capacity control characteristic diagram of the compressor in the second embodiment.

[0010] A refrigerating cycle as e.g. used in an air-conditioning system of an automobile has in Fig. 1 a compressor 10 with variable capacity (amount of discharge). The capacity is changed corresponding to the inhalation pressure P_s of the refrigerant at an inhalation duct 1. Inhalation pressure P_s is controlled by a capacity control valve 100. High-pressure refrigerant having a discharge pressure P_d and as compressed by compressor 10 is supplied in a discharge duct 2 into a condenser 20. Already condensed and liquified refrigerant temporarily is stored in a receiver 30 with an amount corresponding to the initial circulation condition. From receiver 30 high-pressure refrigerant in liquid form is supplied via high-pressure refrigerant ducts 3, 4 to an evaporator 40. Said ducts 3, 4 define a first refrigerant passage in an expansion valve 50 which controls the flow of the refrigerant. The refrigerant is expanded adia-

batically. Low-pressure refrigerant passing through evaporator 40 is evaporated and returned via a second passage 5 in said expansion valve 50 to the inhalation duct 1 of compressor 10. The temperature and the pressure of the refrigerant are sensed at the outlet of the evaporator 40 by a temperature and pressure sensitive power element 70 of expansion valve 50. Said power element 70 serves to control said expansion valve opening and closing strokes depending on variations of the pressure/temperature of the low-pressure refrigerant in the second passage 5 of expansion valve 50.

[0011] In Fig. 2 compressor 10 has a rotatable shaft 11 driven by a belt pulley 13 and disposed in an airtight crank room 12. Shaft 11 serves to drive a fluctuation board 14 disposed in crank room 12. Upon rotation of shaft 11 fluctuation board 14 is fulfilling a rocking motion depending on its inclination in relation to the axis of shaft 11. At least one piston 17 reciprocally is disposed in a cylinder 15 in crank room 12. Piston 17 is connected by a rod 18 with board 14. When board 14 is rocking piston 17 is reciprocated in cylinder 15. Refrigerant is inhaled from an inhalation room 1a into cylinder 15. Inhalation room 1a communicates with inhalation duct 1. After compression of the refrigerant in cylinder 15 the compressed high pressure refrigerant is discharged into a discharge room 2a communicating with discharge duct 2.

[0012] The inclination angle of the fluctuation board 14 is changed in accordance with a pressure P_c in crank room 12. The amount of discharged refrigerant, i.e. the capacity of the compressor 10, is changed according to the inclination angle of the fluctuation board 14. As soon as P_c equals P_s (minimum P_c) compressor 10 is operating with maximum capacity as shown in solid lines in Fig. 2. If P_c is high compressor 10 is adjusted into the state of minimum capacity as shown by the dash/dotted position of board 14. Capacity control valve 100 is situated e.g. in a block in the surrounding of the compressor 10, particularly in a coaxial multistage bore (not shown). A valve seat 101 is provided in the middle of a communicating passage between crank room 12 and discharge room 2a (high-pressure side). A spherical valve body 102 is disposed opposite to valve seat 101 at the side of discharge room 2a. Valve body 102 surveys the communication and is moveable between open and closed state positions.

[0013] A diaphragm 103 separates an inner space of said valve communicating with inhalation room 1a from an outer space which is sealed airtightly and may contain a reference pressure. Between a receiving plate which is moveable together with said diaphragm 103 and valve body 102 a central rod 104 interconnects valve body 102 and diaphragm 103 for common movement. Compression coil springs 105 and 106 load diaphragm 103 in opening direction of valve body 102 and in closing direction, respectively. Since diaphragm 103 is displaced corresponding to variations of inhalation pressure P_s in relation to the reference pressure load-

ing diaphragm 103, valve body 102 is following said movements.

[0014] As soon as inhalation pressure P_s drops below a fixed pressure value valve body 102 is separated from valve seat 101. Discharge pressure P_d is brought from discharge room 2a into crank room 12 and control pressure P_c in crank room 12 rises. The capacity of the compressor 10 is low.

[0015] As soon as control pressure P_c in crank room 12 is higher than said fixed pressure value, valve body 102 is seated on valve seat 101 and the capacity of compressor 10 is adjusted to maximum capacity, since crank room 12 communicates via a small leak passage (not shown) with inhalation room 1a. Due to said leak passage control pressure P_c in crank room 12 drops gradually when valve body 102 is seated such that after a while valve 102 again will be lifted. As a consequence, control pressure P_c in crank room 12 continuously is controlled corresponding to the value of the inhalation pressure P_s and the amount of the capacity of the compressor 10 corresponds to the value of the inhalation pressure P_s .

[0016] In the diagram of Fig. 3 of the relation between the capacity and the inhalation pressure P_s value B is the maximum inhalation pressure within the range in which the capacity of the compressor 10 changes. As soon as inhalation pressure P_s gradually drops below value B with the compressor 10 running with maximum capacity, the capacity automatically starts to decrease.

[0017] Expansion valve 50 in Fig. 4 has a main body block 51 with second passage (outlet duct 5 of evaporator 40) for the flow of low-temperature and low-pressure refrigerant gas as supplied from evaporator 40. Main body block 51 in addition has a first passage (duct 3) into which high-pressure and high-temperature refrigerant fluid is supplied from receiver 30 which fluid is supplied into inlet duct 4 of the evaporator. Said supply of the refrigerant fluid is carried out adiabatically. Second passage (outlet duct 5) directly communicates with inhalation duct 1 of compressor 10. The refrigerant pressure in the outlet duct 5 of the evaporator 40 (outlet pressure of the evaporator 40) is equal to inhalation pressure P_s of compressor 10.

[0018] The first refrigerant passage 3 in main body block 51 has the form of a crank. A contracted portion of said first passage has a valve seat bore 52. In alignment with valve seat bore 52 a penetrating bore 58 is formed between said first and second passages. Said penetrating bore 58 receives a retractable actuation rod 59, one end of which is connected to a valve body 53 associated to said valve seat bore 52 within said first passage at the side of high-pressure refrigerant duct 3. Said valve body is loaded by a compression spring 54 in closing direction. The other end of actuation rod 59 is in driving connection with a power element 70. Said power element, having a temperature sensing room, is installed in an opening part of said main body block 51 in alignment

with penetrating bore 58. Power element 70 at least partially is in temperature and pressure transmitting contact with the refrigerant within said second passage 5 of main block 51. The section of the first passage extending between valve seat bore 52 and inlet duct 4 to evaporator 40 serves to adiabatically expand the high-pressure refrigerant.

[0019] Compression coil spring 54 is supported by an adjusting nut 56 screwed into a mounting opening of main body block 51. By adjusting nut 56 the pre-load or energisation force of compressing coil spring 54 can be adjusted on demand. An O-ring 56 serves to seal this region.

[0020] Actuation rod 59 abuts valve body 53 and passes valve seat bore 52 with radial clearance such that an annular flow passage is defined between valve seat bore 52 and said actuation rod 59.

[0021] As soon as valve body 53 is separated from valve seat bore 52 by pushing actuation rod 59 via power element 70 counter to the force of compression coil spring 45 the cross-sectional area for the passing of the high-pressure refrigerant is increasing. The size of the cross-sectional area depends on the stroke of valve body 53 or the amount of the stroke of actuation rod 59. Any variation of the cross-sectional area varies the flow or demand of refrigerant supplied to evaporator 40.

[0022] Actuation rod 59 is sealed within penetrating bore 58 by O-ring 60 so that no refrigerant is allowed to leak between said first and second passage 50. O-ring is compressed by a small compression coil spring 61.

[0023] A thermal-sensitive room in power element 70 is airtightly closed by a diaphragm 72 fixed to a housing 71 made from relatively thick metal sheet material. Said diaphragm 72 can be a thin metallic sheet, e.g. stainless steel sheet metal of a thickness of about 0.1 mm. At the other side of said thermal-sensitive room of power element 70 a plate 73 is abutting said diaphragm 72. The other end of actuation rod 59 abuts at the centre of plate 73. An O-ring 74 seals the mounting opening for power element 70. Said thermal-sensitive room contains a saturated vapour gas which might be the same as the refrigerant in the refrigerating cycle or may be similar to it. Between power element 70 and the second passage of main block 51 a bushing 75 is stationarily fixed. Said bushing 75 is made of a plastic material or the like having low thermal conductivity. Bushing 75 is penetrated by a ventilation groove 76 in order to establish a communication between the second passage and the surface of the diaphragm 72 outside said thermal-sensitive room. Low-pressure refrigerant within said second passage of main block 51 is allowed to pass through ventilation groove 76 towards diaphragm 72 such that the temperature of the refrigerant within said second passage (the refrigerant exiting the evaporator 40) slowly is transmitted to the power element 70.

[0024] Valve body 53 has a cone-shaped end part with a bore at the top of it into which bore the lower end of actuation rod 59 engages. A slanted surface of the

conical end part of valve body 53 has a smaller cone angle than the cone angle of the tapered surface formed at an entrance section of valve seat bore 52.

[0025] As shown in Fig. 5 at the conical end of valve body 53, which conical end is defining a conical or convexly rounded seat surface, a bump 53a in the form of a protrusion for diving into seat valve bore 52 is provided, the outer diameter of which is a little smaller than the inner diameter of valve seat bore 52 in its cylindrical section continuing the tapered surface defining the entrance portion of valve seat bore 52. The peripheral and e.g. cylindrical surface of bump 53a is parallel with the shaft line of actuation rod 59 and to the inner wall of the cylindrical section of valve seat bore 52. The cone angle of the slant surface of the protrusion, continuing the peripheral wall of the bump 53a, has a cone angle which is larger than the cone angle of the seat surface or conical part of valve body 53. Valve seat bore 52 has a circular closure edge at the transition between its cylindrical bore action and its tapered entrance section. The conical seat surface of valve body 53 seats on said closure edge in the fully closed state position. In the fully closed state position said protrusion or bump 53a is diving into the cylindrical section of valve seat bore 52.

[0026] By the shape of valve body 53 the variation of the cross-section between valve body 53 and valve seat bore 52 is linear within a stroke range between position E where the bump 53a begins to enter or dive into valve seat bore 52 and the fully opened state position (maximum opening stroke).

[0027] However, as shown in Fig. 6, within a first stroke range E to F (Figs 5 and 6) the variation of the cross-section of the passage for the refrigerant is much smaller than the amount of the stroke movement of the valve body 53. Said first stroke range E to F extends between an opening state position E where the bump 53a begins to dive into the cylindrical section of valve seat bore 52 and an opening state position F where bump 53a already has entered the cylindrical bore section of valve seat bore 52 by a considerable amount and valve body 53 already has closed the valve to some extent. In the remaining stroke section between opening state position F and the fully closed state position the relation between the stroke amount of the valve body 53 and the variation of the cross-section of the passage is similar as outside said first range E to F.

[0028] The extent of the valve body moving stroke the stroke section between the fully closed state position and the opened state position F extends between about 10% to 30% of the total stroke of valve body 53 into its fully opened state position. The opened state position E is situated within a range up to less than 50% of the maximum or total stroke of valve body 53 into its fully opened state position. Within said first stroke section between positions F and E the variation of the cross-section of the passage for the refrigerant is smaller in relation to the amount of the moving stroke of the valve body 53 than the variation of the cross-section

within the amount of the moving stroke between the fully closed state position and position F and between position E and the fully opened state position. In other words, the gradient of the variation of the cross-sectional area in relation to the stroke movement of valve body 53 is flatter within stroke section F to E and is steeper in the stroke section between the fully closed state position and position F as well as between the opened state position E and the fully opened state position (MAX).

[0029] If position F is too close to the fully closed state position or if position E is too close to the fully opened state position, the moving stroke amount of valve body 53 would be too large and would cause a problem of endurance. Therefore, it is desirable that positions E and F are situated within the limits as mentioned above.

[0030] A rate of the variation of the cross-section for the moving stroke amount of the valve body 53 between positions F and E less than one half of the rate of variation of the cross-section over the other ranges. This is particularly advantageous for controlling hunting in the flow of the refrigerant. Since it is complicated to achieve a variation of the cross-section between positions F and E smaller than one fourth than the variation of the cross-sections in the other stroke sections due to manufacturing limits or the like, a variation of the cross-section between position F and E amounting between one fourth to one half of the variation of the cross-section in the other stroke section may be preferable. Even if the upper limit of the variation of the cross-section between positions F and E is less than two thirds of the variation of the cross-section in the other stroke section, this can suffice to get a useful effect when controlling hunting.

[0031] In the embodiment shown in Fig. 7 valve body 53 has another design. The transition between the protrusion or bump 53a and the conical seat surface of valve body 53 is defined by a constricted part or circumferential groove 53b. This allows to even reduce the rate of the variation of the cross-section between positions F and E in relation to the rate of the variation of the cross-section in the other stroke sections.

[0032] In the temperature/pressure diagram of Fig. 8 a saturating curve of the refrigerant (the refrigerant circulated through the refrigerating cycle) is shown, as well as a characteristic curve of the refrigerant in the outlet duct 5 of the evaporator 40 when valve body 53 of expansion valve 50 starts to open from its fully closed state position. Both curves intersect each other at a point A, representing a value of the pressure of the refrigerant in outlet duct 5 of the evaporator being essentially equal to the initial inhalation pressure P_s of compressor 10.

[0033] Provided that the value B in the diagram of Fig. 3 of inhalation pressure P_s is the value at which the capacity of the compressor 10 will decrease from maximum capacity, the capacity will not decrease when valve body 53 of expansion valve 50 starts to open, if

value A in the diagram of Fig. 8 was higher than value B of the maximum inhalation pressure B in the diagram of Fig. 3 in a range where the capacity of compressor 10 should change. Then hunting of the flow of the refrigerant will not occur. However, in case of high load on the refrigerating cycle, the achievable effect of air-conditioning will not satisfy and it will be hard to cool sufficiently. Even a liquid phase of the refrigerant fluid will be forced to return to the compressor 10. Therefore, in order to achieve a sufficient air-conditioning effect the prerequisite of value A equal to smaller than B should be satisfied.

[0034] If in a conventional refrigerating cycle a setting is made to have value A equal to or smaller than value B, hunting of the flow of the refrigerant may occur, because the capacity of the compressor 10 will change immediately when valve body 53 of the expansion valve 50 begins to open.

[0035] However, as according to the invention and in the refrigerating cycle of the embodiment as described sharp variations of the flow of the refrigerant are suppressed, the flow of the refrigerant is continuously controlled, and hunting does not occur, since the variation of the cross-section of the passage for the refrigerant in relation to the lift stroke amount of valve body 53 is small within the first stroke range between positions F and E when the expansion valve opens as mentioned above. Said positive control or suppression of sharp flow variations through the expansion valve 50 even can be achieved when the characteristic curve of the refrigerant exiting evaporator 40 as soon as expansion valve 50 begins to open does not cross the saturating curve of the refrigerant as shown in Fig. 9. Even then hunting will be controlled or suppressed.

[0036] Fig. 10 depicts another embodiment of a capacity control valve 200 used in a refrigerating cycle of a second embodiment of the invention. Said capacity control valve 200 controls the capacity of compressor 10 in correspondence to inhalation pressure P_s . The point where the capacity of the compressor starts to change is just the same as described for the first embodiment. However, with capacity control valve 200 of Fig. 10 it is possible to arbitrarily shift by a solenoid 210 the range of the inhalation pressure P_s where the capacity of the compressor starts to change. The further configuration of the refrigerating cycle is the same as in the first embodiment.

[0037] In Fig. 10 in a middle region of a cylinder 201 of a main body a crank room communicating part 202 is formed communicating via a side bore with crank room 12. An end part of said cylinder 201 defines a discharge room communicating part 203 communicating with discharge room 2a via an axial opening. Between parts 202 and 203 a central axial valve bore 204 is provided co-acting with a spherical valve part 205 located in part 203. Part 203 receives a weak compression coil spring 206 loading valve ball 205 to keep it at the opening of valve ball 204 as long as valve ball 205 is not

pushed upwardly into part 203 against the force of spring 206 by a valve driving rod 207 penetrating valve bore 204 with radial clearance through.

[0038] Main body 201 further contains an inhalation room communicating part 208 communicating through a side bore with inhalation room 1a. Valve driving rod 207 extends to the centre of a diaphragm 226. A solenoid 210, consisting of a stationary electromagnetic coil 211, a stationary fixed iron core 212 at the side of diaphragm 226 and a moveable iron core 214 loosely engaging in one end of inhalation chamber communicating part 208 is provided. Moveable iron core 214 is loosely inserted in a sleeve 213 extending inside solenoid 210. An end surface of valve driving rod 207 abuts an end surface of moveable iron core 214. Rod 207 is continued by coaxial rod 221 extending between the other end surface of moveable iron core 214 and the centre of a plate 225 abutting diaphragm 226. A compression coil spring 221 is disposed between moveable iron core 214 and fixed iron core 212. Spring 221 has a stronger spring force than compression coil spring 206 in part 203.

[0039] If there is no other force than the force of compression coil spring 221 acting on the moveable iron core 214 and rod 207, valve ball 205 is lifted from valve bore 204 and is brought into its fully opened state position. A stopper 222 serves to limit the maximum opening stroke of valve ball 205.

[0040] As soon as electric current is supplied to electromagnetic coil 211 moveable iron core 214 is attracted by fixed iron core 212 counter to the force of spring 221 causing valve ball 205 to seat on valve bore 204.

[0041] Diaphragm 226 is installed close the lower end affixed iron core 212 facing plate 225. The outer surface of diaphragm 226 is free to ambient air pressure. A space 227 inside diaphragm 226 (between diaphragm 226 and the lower end of fixed iron core 212) communicates through a penetrating bore 223 with inhalation room communication part 208. Space 227 can be considered as a part of the inhalation room communicating part 208.

[0042] A pressurising mechanism 230 is provided serving to load diaphragm 226 with a reference pressure in moving direction towards fixed iron core 212. A moveable piston 231 abuts the outer surface of diaphragm 226. Compression coil springs 223 and 234 are provided between moveable piston 231 and a spring counterfort 232 which can be adjusted to finely adjust the acting forces of compression coil springs 234.

[0043] Inhalation pressure P_s is applied on the inner surface of diaphragm 226. The ambient air pressure and the force of compression coil springs 233 and 234 is applied as said reference pressure. The resulting difference pressure is applied by diaphragm 226 to plate 225 and rod 224.

[0044] If electric current is supplied to electromagnetic coil 221 of solenoid 210 the pressure acting on

plate 225 acts via rod 224 and moveable iron core 214 at valve driving rod 207. Valve ball 205 is controlled to open and close corresponding to variations of inhalation pressure P_s . As a consequence the capacity of compressor 10 is controlled. The value of the inhalation pressure P_s for a change between the open and close condition of valve ball 205 can be varied or shifted by varying the value of electric currents for electromagnetic coil 211. This allows to arbitrarily shift the response point for the initiated capacity change.

[0045] In the diagram of Fig. 11 (relation between capacity and inhalation pressure P_s of the compressor 10, the capacity of which is controlled by capacity control valve 200) pressure value B1 is maximum inhalation pressure in the range where the capacity is changed under the condition that the range of the inhalation pressure P_s by which the capacity is changed is shifted to the side of the maximum by capacity control valve 200. Pressure value B2 is the maximum inhalation pressure in the range where the capacity is changed under the condition that the range of the inhalation pressure P_s by which the capacity of the compressor is changed is shifted to the side of the minimum by capacity control valve 200.

[0046] If for this embodiment pressure values A and B1 are predetermined such that pressure value A equals or is smaller than pressure value of B1 as shown in Fig. 8 hunting can be effectively controlled. If further pressure value A is equal or smaller than pressure value B2 it is possible to control hunting of the flow of refrigerant and to simultaneously achieve an excellent cooling ability even conditions where the range of the inhalation pressure P_s where the capacity is changed, is shifted.

[0047] It furthermore is possible to achieve a balance between a satisfying cooling effect and the hunting control of the flow of the refrigerant by selecting the pressure value A to a proper pressure value between pressure value B1 and pressure value B2 (pressure B2 equal or smaller than pressure value A equal or smaller than pressure value B1).

[0048] The compressor 10 with variable capacity needs not to be an inclined board type, but may instead be a rotary type, a scroll type or the like.

Claims

1. An expansion valve (50) in a refrigerating cycle including a compressor (10) the capacity of which is variable corresponding to variations of the compressor inhalation pressure (P_s), said expansion valve comprising a valve body (53) disposed in a passage (3, 4) for high-pressure refrigerant supplied to an evaporator (40) adjacent to a valve seat bore (52) formed by a contraction in the middle of said passage, the position of said valve body (53) being controlled between fully closed and opened states corresponding to variations of temperature and pressure of low-pressure refrigerant exiting

said evaporator (40) and passing said expansion valve in a further low-pressure passage (5), wherein a variation of the cross-section of the passage between said valve body (53) and said valve seat bore (52) for a stroke increment of said valve body (53) within a first stroke range from a position in the neighbourhood of the fully closed state to an intermediate opening state position is adjusted to be smaller than the variation of the cross-section through the same passage for an equal stroke increment within other stroke ranges further distant from said fully closed state position.

2. Expansion valve as in claim 1, wherein said first stroke range of the stroke increments of said valve body (53) in relation to said valve seat bore (52) close to said fully closed state position extends between about 10% to 50%, optionally between 10% to about 30%, of the entire valve opening stroke, and wherein said variation of the cross-section of the passage for the refrigerant within said first stroke range is smaller than about two thirds of the variation of said cross-section within said other stroke ranges.
3. Expansion valve as in claim 2, wherein said first stroke range close to said fully closed state position of the valve body (53) extends between about 10% to 50%, preferably 10% to 30% of the total valve opening stroke, and wherein the variation of the cross-section of the passage for the refrigerant within said first stroke range is about one fourth to one half of the variation of the cross-section in said other ranges.
4. Expansion valve as in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion is set such that $A \leq B$, wherein A is a value of the pressure of the refrigerant represented by an intersection point between a saturating curve of the refrigerant and a characteristic curve of the refrigerant as supplied from the evaporator (40), wherein B is the value of the maximum inhalation pressure (P_s) in the range in which the capacity of the compressor (10) is changed, and wherein said value A represents the pressure at which said valve body (52) begins to open from its fully closed state.
5. Expansion valve as in claim 1, 2, or 3, wherein said compressor (10) comprises an actuation pressure shift means (200) for shifting the range of the inhalation pressure (P_s) by which the capacity of the compressor is changed, said inhalation pressure in turn corresponding to the pressure of the refrigerant supplied from the evaporator (40), and wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion valve (50) is set such that $A \leq B1$,

wherein A is a value of a pressure at which said valve body (52) begins to open from its fully closed state,

and wherein B1 is the value of the maximum inhalation pressure (Ps) in the range of changing the capacity with the range of the inhalation pressure (Ps) such that the capacity is changed at the side of its maximum as soon as said actuation pressure shift means has shifted said range of the inhalation pressure (Ps).

6. Expansion valve as in claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein said compressor (10) comprises an actuation pressure shift means (200) for shifting the range of the inhalation pressure by which the capacity is changed, said inhalation pressure in turn equalling the pressure of the refrigerant supplied from said evaporator (40), wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion (50) is set such that $B2 \leq A \leq B1$, A being a value of a pressure at which said valve body (52) begins to open from its fully closed state, wherein B1 is a value of a pressure of the maximum inhalation pressure (Ps) in the range of changing the capacity with the range of the inhalation pressure (Ps) such that the capacity is changed at the side of its maximum as soon as said actuation pressure shift means has shifted said range of the inhalation pressure (Ps), and wherein B2 is the value of the maximum inhalation pressure (Ps) when shifted by said actuation pressure shift means (200) within the range of changing the capacity with the range of the inhalation pressure and when said capacity is changed at the side of its minimum.
7. Expansion valve as in claim 1, 2, or 3, wherein said compressor (10) comprises an actuation pressure shift means (200) for shifting the range of the inhalation pressure (Ps) by which the capacity is changed, said inhalation pressure (Ps) in turn being equal to the pressure of the refrigerant supplied from said evaporator (40), wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion valve (50) is set such that $A \leq B2$, wherein A is a value of a pressure at which said valve body (52) begins to open from its fully closed state, and wherein B2 is the value of the maximum inhalation pressure (Ps) when shifted by said actuation pressure shift means (200) within the range of changing the capacity with the range of the inhalation pressure and when said capacity is changed at the side of its minimum.
8. Expansion valve as in any of claims 1 to 7, wherein in the temperature/pressure characteristic diagram of the refrigerant containing the saturating

curve of said refrigerant as well as a characteristic curve of the refrigerant at the outlet of said evaporator (40) as soon as said valve body (52) begins to open, said characteristic curve of the refrigerant remaining within the whole range of varying pressure or varying temperature without any intersection point below said saturating curve.

9. An expansion (50) in a refrigerating cycle including a compressor (10) the capacity of which is variable corresponding to variations of the compressor inhalation pressure (Ps), said expansion valve comprising a first refrigerant passage (3, 4) for high-pressure refrigerant to be supplied to an evaporator (40), and a second refrigerant passage (5) for low-pressure refrigerant exiting said evaporator (40), a valve seat bore (52) within said first passage and a valve body (53) associated to said valve seat bore (52) for a moving stroke in relation to said valve seat bore between fully closed and fully opened state positions and into intermediately opened state position, said valve body (53) being driven by a temperature and/or pressure sensitive power element (70) provided in temperature and pressure communication with said second passage (5), wherein said total valve lift stroke of said valve body (53) in opening direction is divided into a first stroke section and into at least one further stroke section, said first stroke section (F-E) beginning at an opened state position close to the fully closed state position, said second stroke section (E-MAX) beginning at the end of said first stroke section, and wherein said valve body (53) is co-acting with said valve seat bore (52) such that within said first stroke section a variation of the cross-section between said valve body and valve seat bore is adjusted for a given stroke increment to be smaller than any variation of the cross-section for any stroke increment of the same magnitude within said at least one further stroke section.
10. Expansion valve as in claim 9, wherein the first stroke section (F-E) extends over about 10% to maximum about 50% of the total lift stroke.
11. Expansion valve in claim 9, wherein said first stroke section (F-E) extends over about 10% to maximum about 30% of the total lift stroke.
12. Expansion valve as in claim 9, wherein said variation of the cross-section with a stroke increment within said first stroke section (F-E) is about one fourth to about one half of the variation of the cross-section with a stroke increment of the same magnitude within the second or further stroke section.

13. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein said variation of the cross-section within
said first stroke section is less than about two thirds
of the variation of the cross-section within the second
or further stroke section. 5
14. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion
valve is set such that said power element (17)
starts to lift said valve body (53) from its fully closed
state position at a value (A) of said inhalation pressure
(Ps) defined by the intersection point between
a saturating curve of said refrigerant within a temperature/pressure
diagram and the characteristic curve of the refrigerant supplied
from said evaporator (40), said value (A) being equal or smaller
than a value (B) of a pressure corresponding to the maximum
inhalation pressure (Ps) by which the capacity
of said compressor starts to change. 10 15
15. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein said compressor comprises an actuation
pressure shift means (200) for shifting the range of
the inhalation pressure for changing the capacity,
said inhalation pressure corresponding to the pressure
of the refrigerant supplied from said evaporator
(40),
wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion
valve (50) is set such that said power element
(70) starts to lift said valve body (50) from the fully
closed state position at a value (A) of the refrigerant
supplied from said evaporator (40), said value (A)
corresponding to an intersection point between the
saturating curve of said refrigerant within a temperature/pressure
diagram and a characteristic curve of said refrigerant supplied
from said evaporator as soon as said valve body begins to leave
its fully closed state position,
wherein said value (A) being equal or smaller than
a value (B1) corresponding to the value of the maximum
inhalation pressure (Ps) as shifted by said
actuation pressure shift means (200) and when the
capacity starts to change at the side of its maximum. 20 25 30 35 40
16. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein said compressor (10) comprises an actuation
pressure shift means (200) for shifting the
range of the inhalation pressure (SPs) at which the
capacity is changed, said inhalation pressure (Ps)
in turn being equal to the pressure of the refrigerant
supplied from said evaporator (40),
wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion
valve (50) is set such that said power element
(70) starts to lift said valve body (53) from its fully
closed state position at a value (A) of the pressure
of the refrigerant supplied from said evaporator
(40), said value (A) corresponding to an intersection 55

tion point between the saturating curve of said
refrigerant within a temperature/pressure diagram
and a characteristic curve of said refrigerant supplied
from said evaporator as soon as said valve
body begins to leave its fully closed state position,
said value (A) being equal or larger than a value
(B2) of the maximum inhalation pressure (Ps) and
is equal or smaller than a value (B1) of said maximum
inhalation pressure (Ps),
wherein the value (B2) corresponds to the maximum
inhalation pressure when shifted by said actuation
pressure shift means (200) for changing the
capacity at the side of its maximum, and
wherein said value (B2) is the maximum inhalation
pressure as shifted by the actuation shift means
(200) and for changing the capacity at the side of its
minimum.

17. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein said compressor (10) comprises an actuation
pressure shift means (200) for shifting the
range of the inhalation pressure (Ps) by which the
capacity is changed, said inhalation pressure (Ps)
being equal to the pressure of the refrigerant supplied
from said evaporator (40),
wherein the operational behaviour of said expansion
valve is set such that said power element (70)
starts to move said valve body (53) from its fully
closed state position at a value (A) of the pressure
of the refrigerant supplied by said evaporator (40),
said value (A) being defined by the intersection
point between the saturating curve of said refrigerant
within a temperature/pressure diagram and a
characteristic curve of said refrigerant supplied
from said evaporator as soon as said valve body
begins to leave its fully closed state position,
wherein said value (A) is equal to or smaller than a
value (B2) corresponding to the value of the maximum
inhalation pressure when being shifted by
said actuation pressure shift means (200) and
when the capacity starts to change at the side of its
minimum. 20 25 30 35 40
18. Expansion valve as in claim 9,
wherein said valve seat bore (52) is formed with an
axial cylindrical bore section terminating at a circular
closure edge facing said valve body (53),
wherein said valve body (53) is formed with a conical
or convexly rounded seat surface for a hermetically
tight contact co-action with said closure edge
in said fully closed state position, and
wherein said seat surface is prolonged by a plunger
protrusion (53a) coaxial with the axis of said cylindrical
bore section, said plunger protrusion having
a slightly smaller outer diameter than the inner
diameter of said closure edge. 45 50 55

19. Expansion valve as in claim 18, wherein said

plunger protrusion (53a) is formed with a cylindrical peripheral surface with a circular transition into said seat surface, and with a conical end surface, the cone angle of which being larger than the cone angle of said surface at said circular transition.

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20. Expansion valve as in claim 18, wherein said plunger protrusion (53a) is formed with a conical end surface, the cone angle of which is larger than the cone angle of said seat surface, and wherein a circular transition is provided between said plunger protrusion (53a) and said seat surface, said circular transition being defined by a circumferential groove (53b) in the periphery of said valve body (53).
21. Expansion valve as in claim 18, wherein said valve seat bore (52) is formed with a conically widened entrance region terminating at said closure edge, and wherein the cone angle of said entrance region is substantially equal to the cone angle of said end surface of said plunger protrusion (53a).
22. Expansion valve as in claim 18, wherein said valve body (53) is secured to one end of an actuation rod (59) passing said valve seat bore (59) with radial clearance, said actuation rod (59) and said cylindrical bore section defining an annular refrigerant passage within a contraction of said first refrigerant passage (3, 4).

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Fig.1

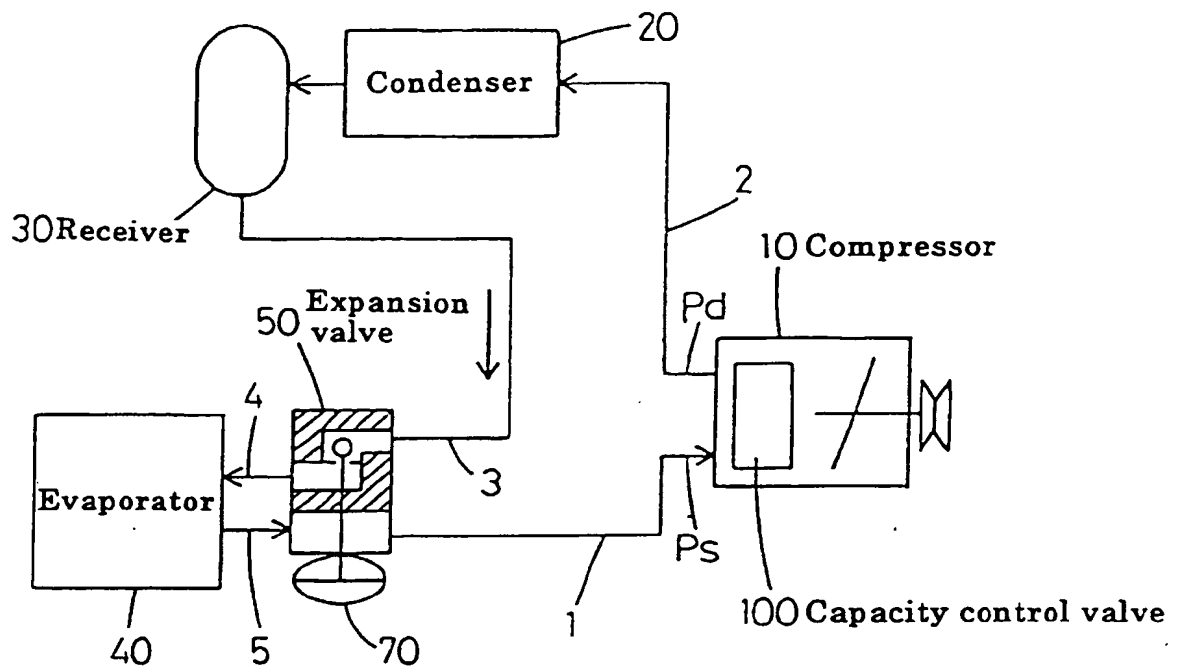


Fig.2

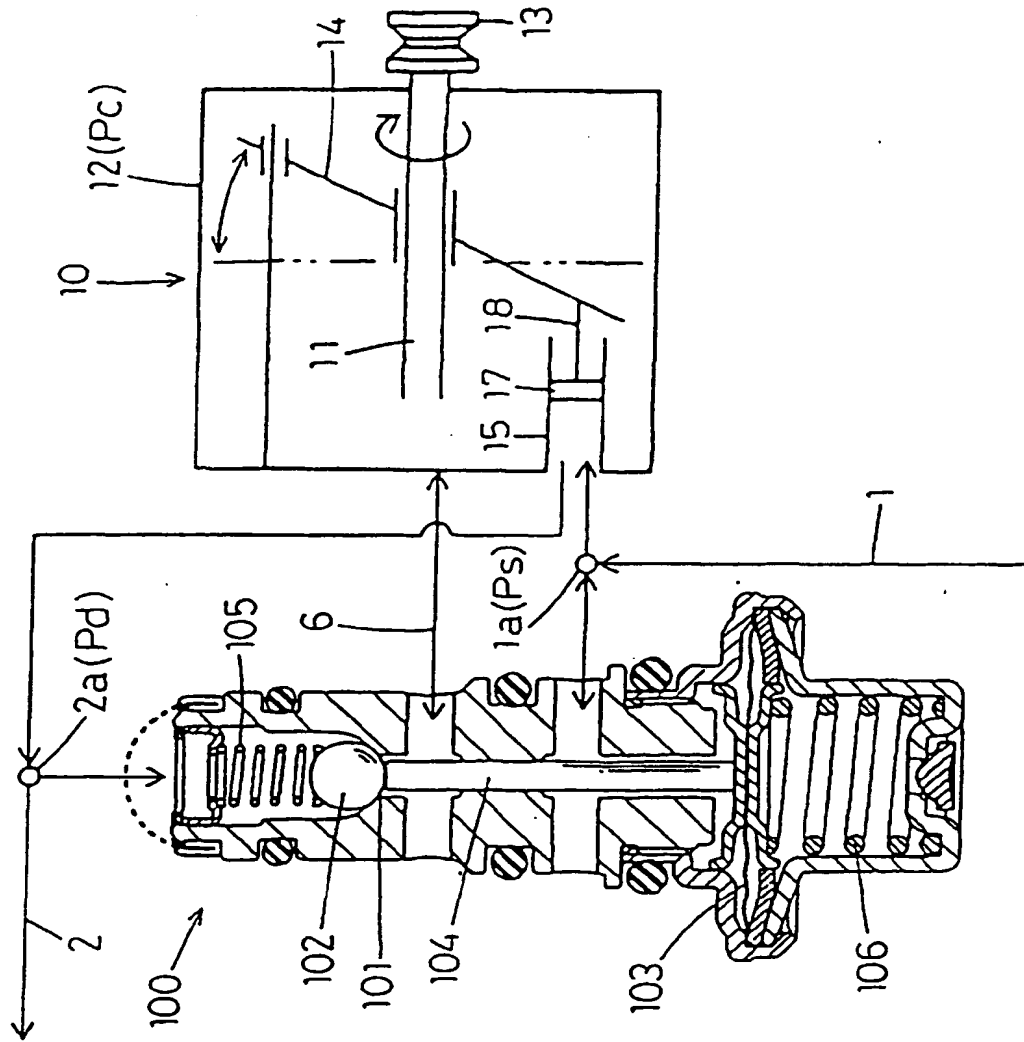


Fig.3

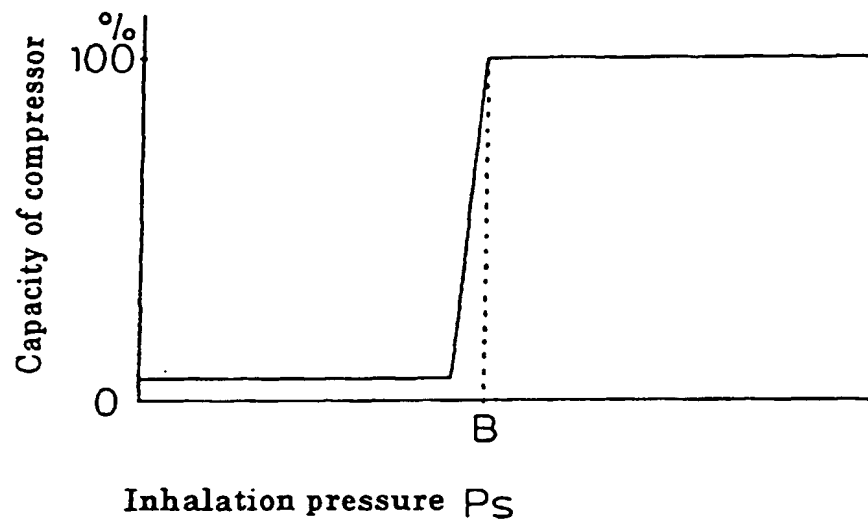


Fig.4

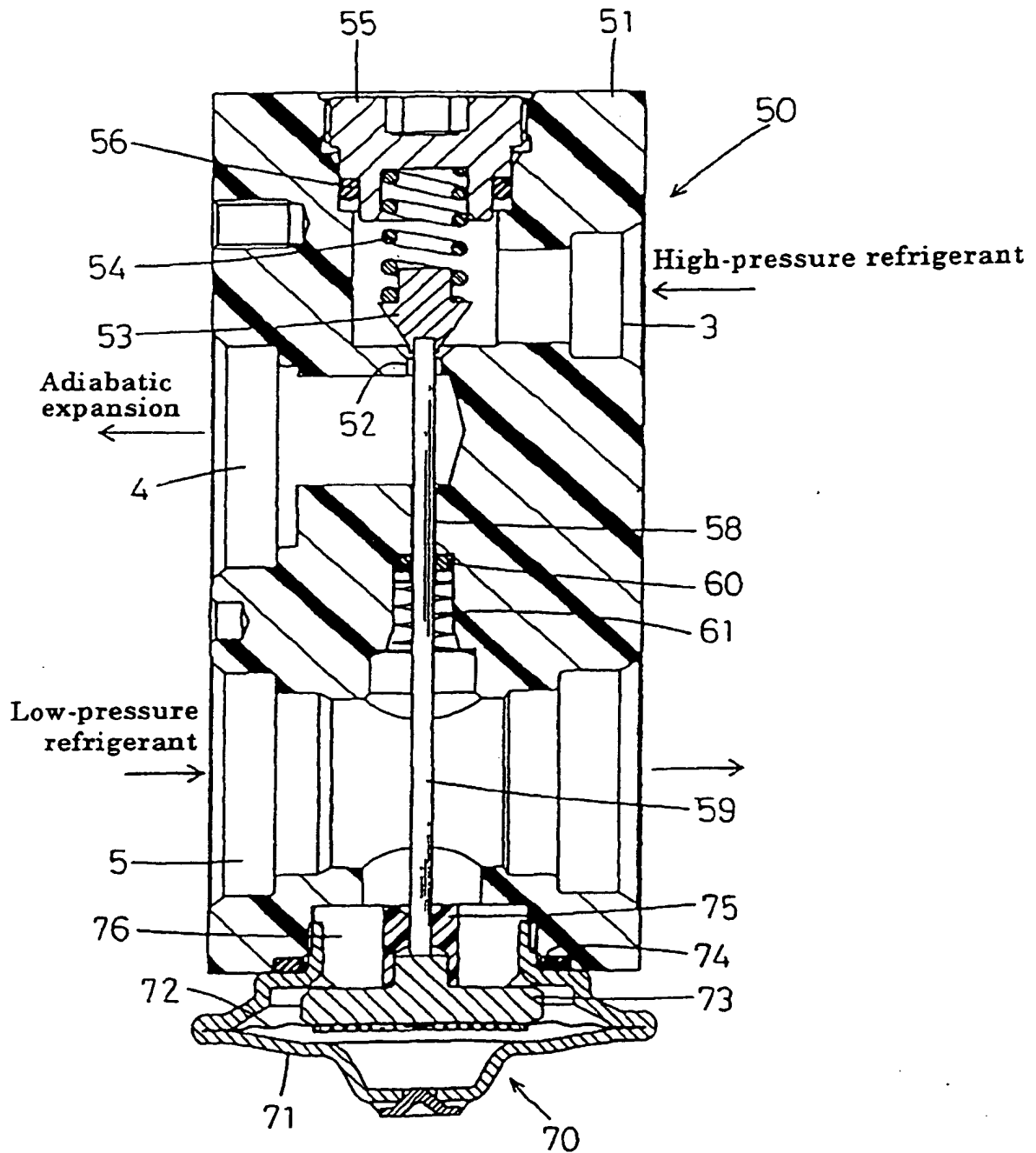


Fig.5

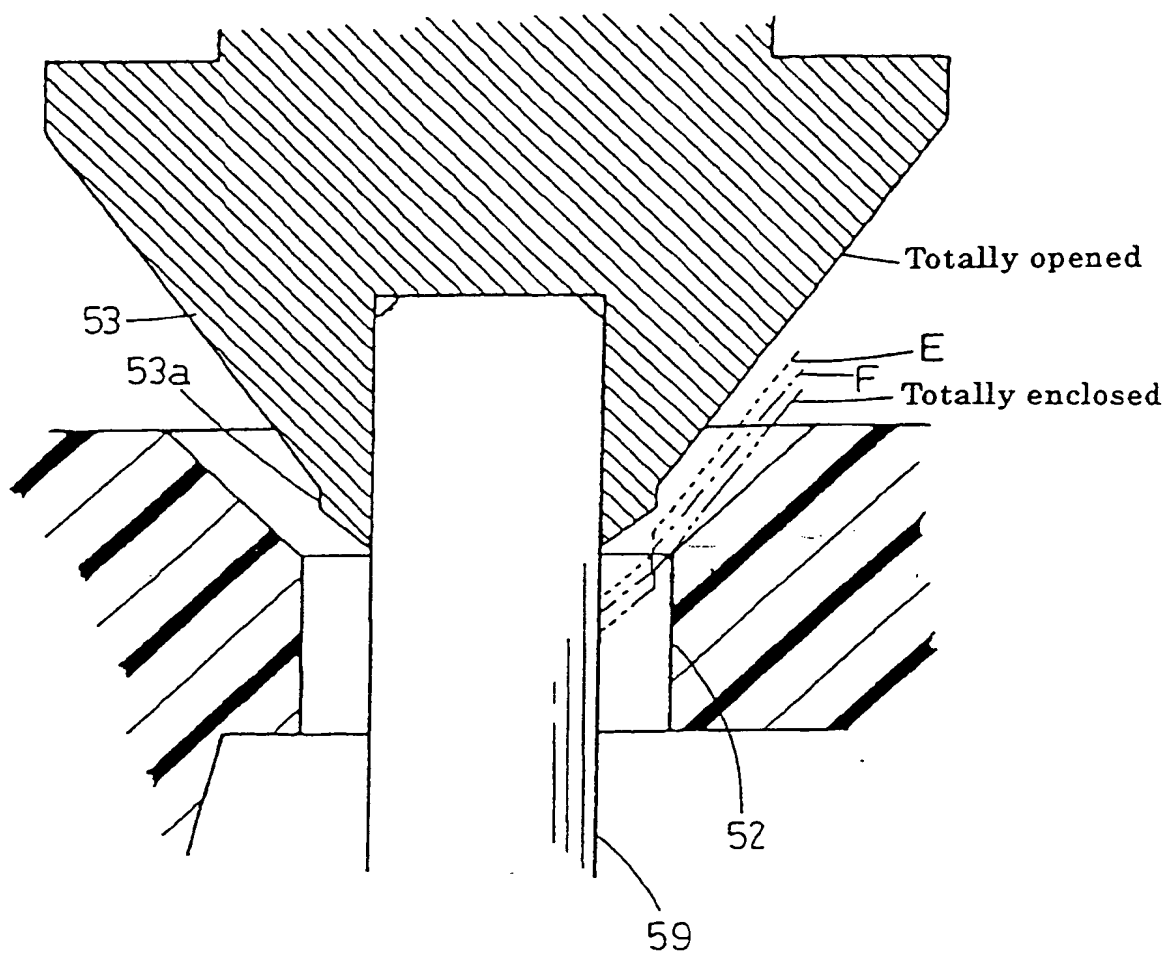
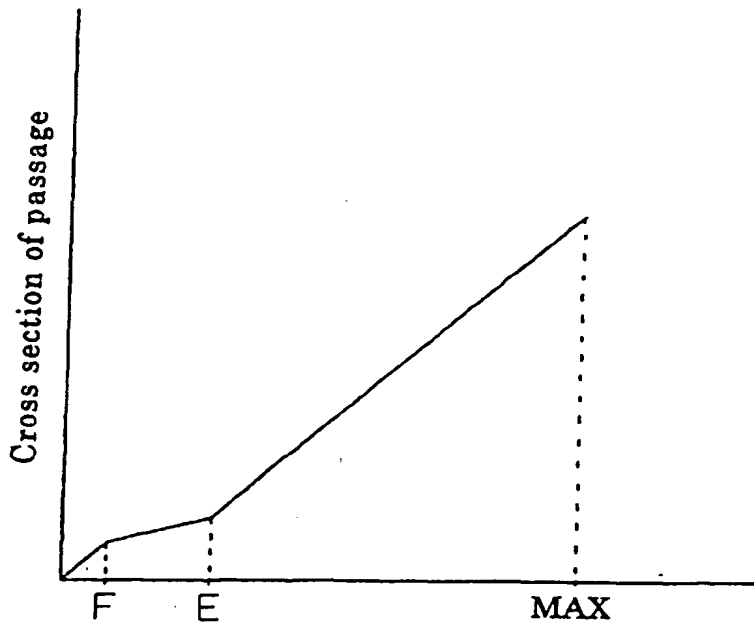


Fig.6



Amount of moving of valve body of expansion valve

Fig.7

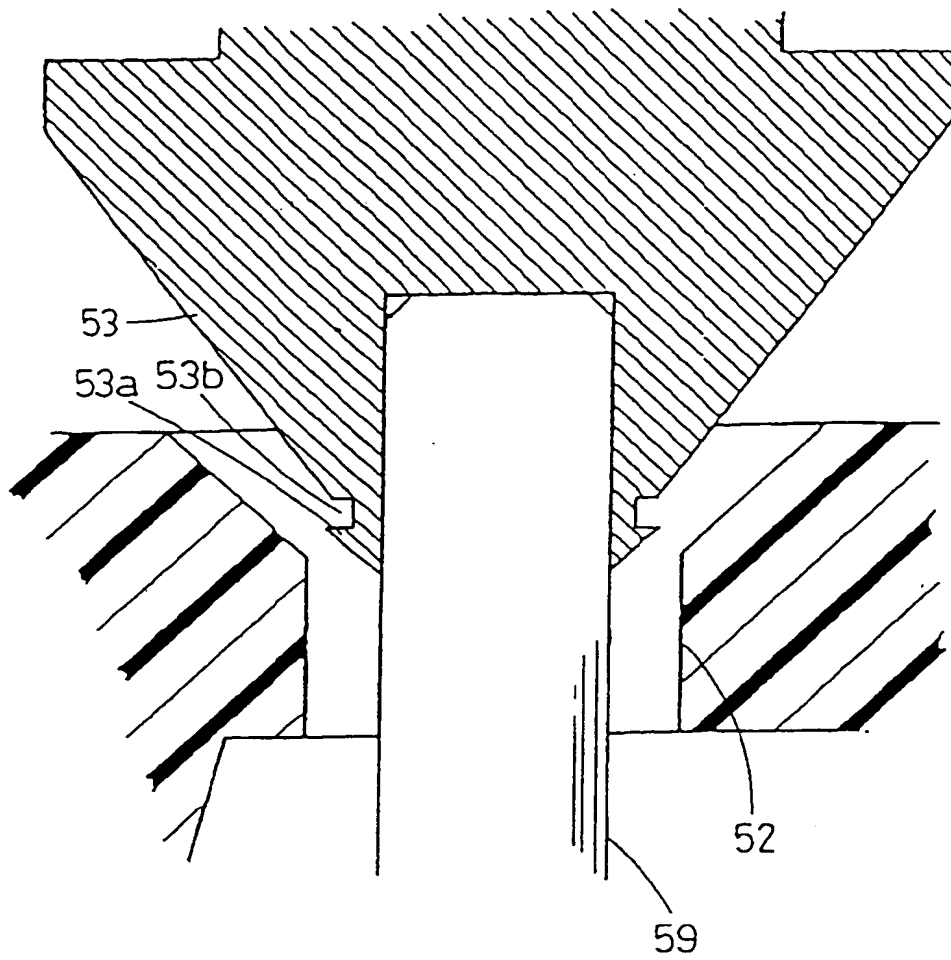
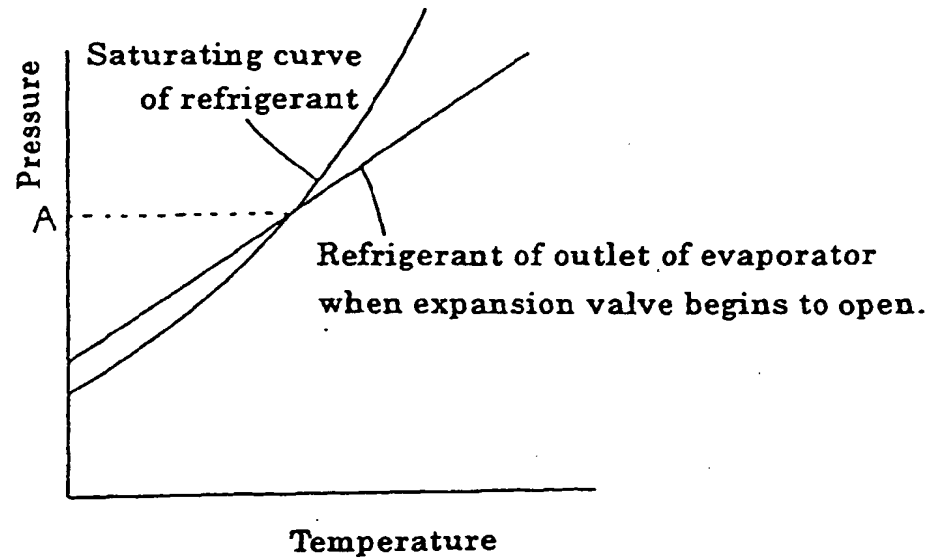


Fig.8



[Fig.9]

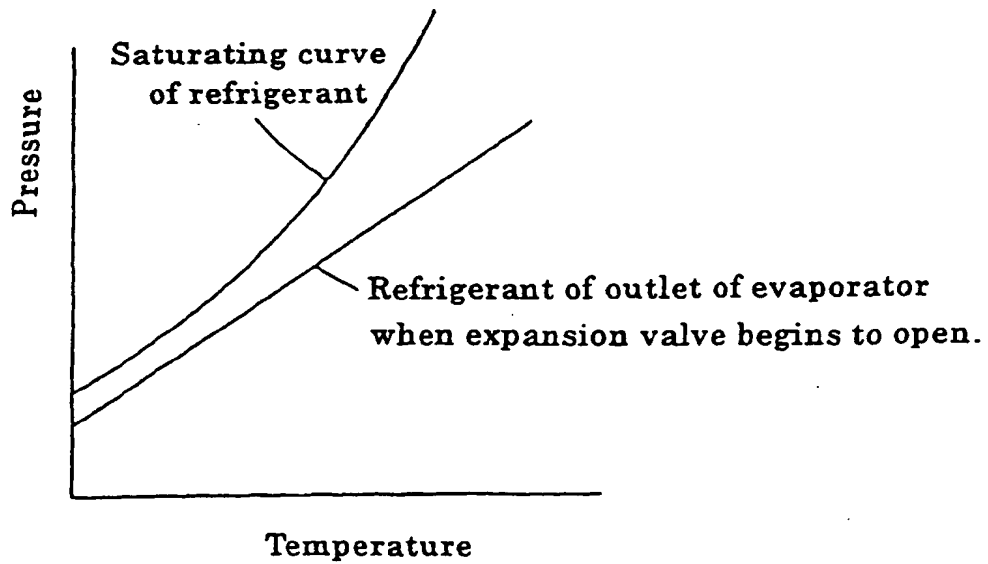


Fig.10

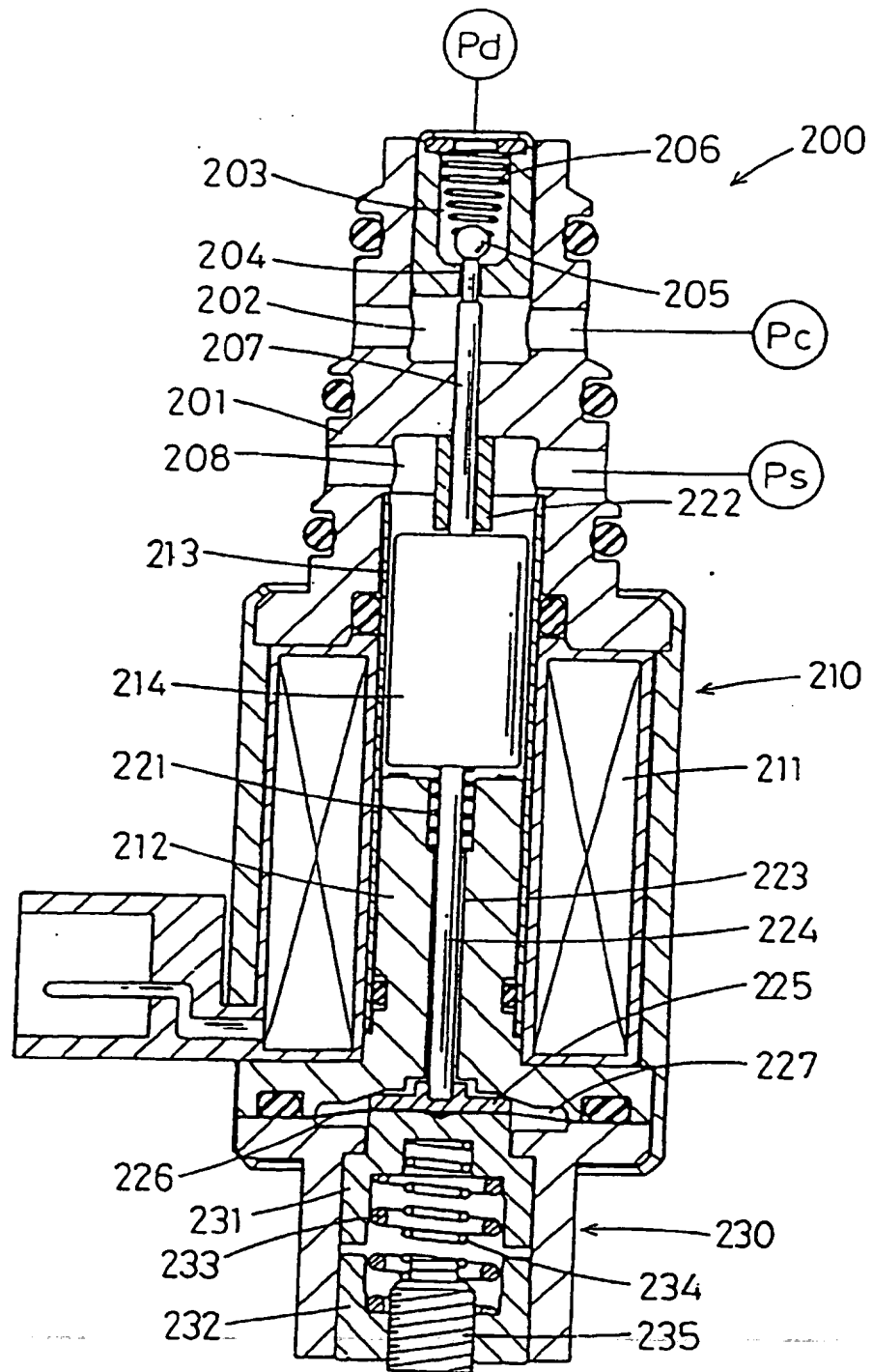
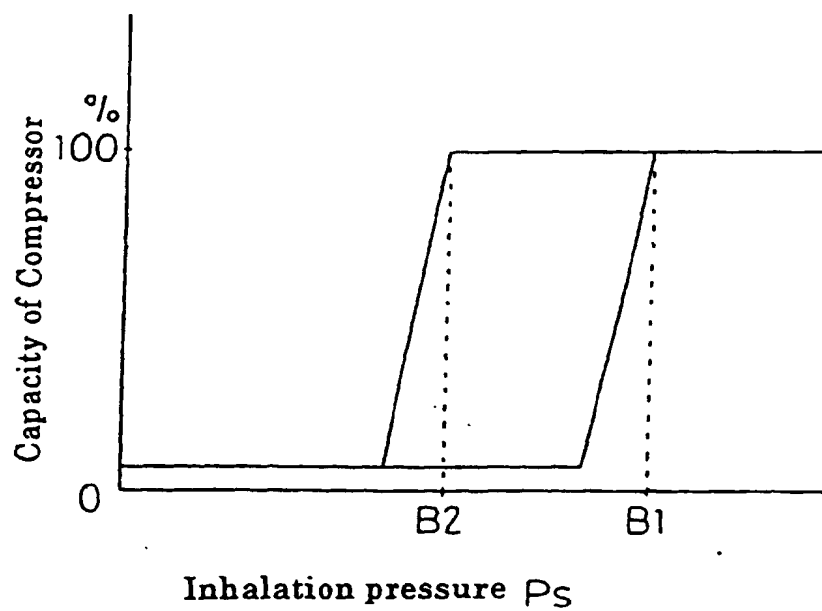


Fig.11



(19)



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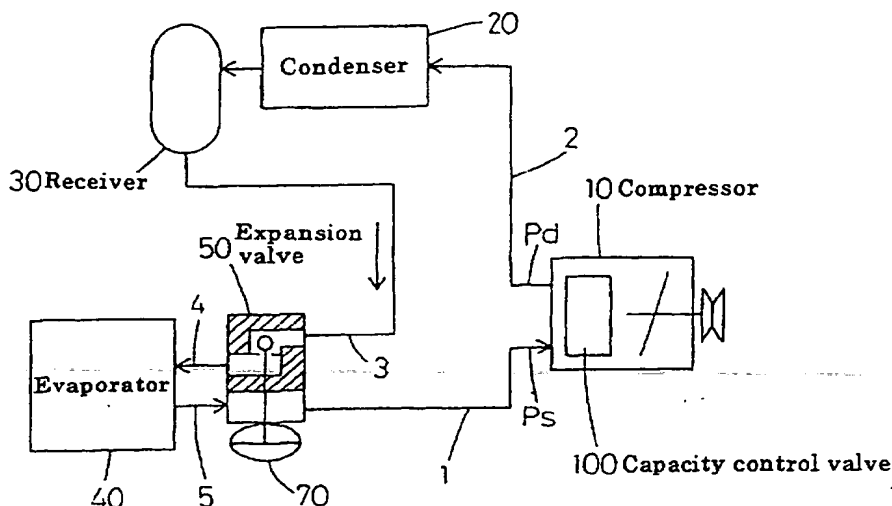
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(54) An expansion valve in a refrigerating cycle

(57) An expansion valve (50) of a refrigerating cycle containing a compressor (10) with variable capacity, hunting of the flow of the refrigerant as soon as the expansion valve (50) starts to open in a condition where the capacity of the compressor (10) is varied, the variation of the cross-section of the passage of the refrigerant in the expansion over a selected amount of the moving

stroke of a valve body (53) of the expansion valve (50) is less than the variation of the cross-section with another moving stroke amount of the valve body (53). The stroke section or stroke range with the reduced gradient of the variation of the cross-section extends between a position (E) in the neighbourhood of the fully closed state position and a position (F) in a middle part of the opening stroke of the expansion.

Fig.1





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

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| | | | F25B F04B B60H F16K G05D |
| The present search report has been drawn up for all claims | | | |
| Place of search THE HAGUE | | Date of completion of the search 13 November 2001 | Examiner Yousuf1, S |
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| X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document | | T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document | |

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